

INFORMATION REQUEST

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PRIVACY ACT	CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS	OTHER (specify)
FOIA	DEPT. OF JUSTICE INVESTIGATIONS	
LITIGATION	MANDATORY CLASSIFICATION REVIEW	
REQUESTER		REQUEST NO.
SUBJECT OF REQUEST		DATE OF REQUEST

DOCUMENTS SUBJECT TO REQUEST - INCLUDE FILE NO., SYMBOL, DATE AND SUBJECT

FBI review(s)
completed.

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REMARKS

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DATE OF COMPONENT RESPONSE

DATE APPEALED (if applicable)

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Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington 25, D. C.

August 14, 1951

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
VIA LIAISON

General Walter Bedell Smith
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
2430 E Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear General Smith:

Your agency has previously been furnished information regarding the espionage activities of Julius Rosenberg in 1948 in obtaining secret data relative to United States experiments on the nuclear energy propulsion of aircraft. I am enclosing one copy of a memorandum which sets forth additional details regarding this matter.

Copies of this memorandum are being furnished to Rear Admiral Sidney W. Souers, Special Consultant to the President; Honorable James S. Lay, Jr., Executive Secretary, National Security Council; The Attorney General; Major General Ralph J. Canine, Director, Armed Forces Security Agency; Major General Joseph F. Carroll, Director of Special Investigations, The Inspector General, USAF; Honorable Gordon E. Dean, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission; Director, National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Department of the Army; and Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy.

With assurances of my highest regards,

Sincerely yours,

Enclosure

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JULIUS ROSENBERG, et al

Following the publicity appearing in the press in February, 1951, regarding the nuclear energy propulsion of aircraft, David Greenglass recalled that on one occasion in 1948 his brother-in-law, Julius Rosenberg, informed him that the mathematics had been worked out for the production of an atomic airplane engine. Greenglass said he gained the impression that Rosenberg had been in possession of these mathematics.

In a recent reinterview David Greenglass was able to furnish the following additional details. He stated that possibly in the Spring of 1948, but more likely in September or October, 1948, he was having a conversation with Julius Rosenberg and Bernard Greenglass, his brother. During this conversation Rosenberg mentioned that the mathematics had all been worked out for the construction of an atomic energy airplane motor. Later, Greenglass in private asked Rosenberg how he knew of the matter. Rosenberg replied that he had learned about it from "one of his boys." Greenglass questioned him about the possibility of the plane's pilot receiving radiation burns. Rosenberg said this had been solved by placing the pilot and passengers far away from the shielded power plant. Bernard Greenglass has stated he does not recall any discussion of the matter.

In addition to the foregoing a confidential informant whose reliability cannot be accurately judged, but who has had contact with Julius Rosenberg, has stated that Rosenberg told him William Perl, formerly an employee of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics in Cleveland, had furnished him with much valuable information. Rosenberg stated this included the plans for the use of "nuclear fission to propel airplanes." The informant stated Rosenberg told him Perl was a brilliant man in the field of aerodynamics and that some of the material furnished to Rosenberg by Perl was "terrific."

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An investigation has indicated that Rosenberg's remarks must have concerned themselves with the highly confidential NEPA (Nuclear Energy for the Propulsion of Aircraft) project. It has been indicated that the mathematics pertaining to the project would probably refer to the mathematics of the power plant. Chapter III of the so-called "Lexington Report" which was dated September 30, 1948, concerned "power plants." The mathematical analysis of a nuclear power plant appears in a supplemental report entitled "Appendices to Chapter III - Power Plants, Nuclear Power Flight," which is still classified secret.

The investigation has reflected that Dr. Abraham Silverstein, Perl's superior at NACA in Cleveland did have in his possession a copy of the "Lexington Report" in the Fall of 1948. Dr. Silverstein has advised that he did not allow Perl access to this report.

Neither Perl nor Rosenberg have been willing to discuss the details of their espionage activity with Government representatives. Perl was indicted for perjury on March 13, 1951, in the Southern District of New York and is presently awaiting trial. Rosenberg is under a sentence of death imposed in Federal Court, Southern District of New York, on April 5, 1951. He is presently incarcerated in the New York Penitentiary at Ossining, New York.